



RABBI SHALOM

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Think Rationally Towards the Future

בַּעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּא נֹחַ וְשֵׁם־וְחָם וַיִּפֹּת בְּנֵי
נֹחַ וַאֲשֶׁת נֹחַ וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת נְשֵׂי־בָנָיו אִתָּם אֶל־הַתֵּבָה
(בראשית ז:יג)

In the middle of this very day, Noach came, and Shem and Ham and Yafet, Noach's sons, and Noach's wife and his sons' three wives with them, into the ark. (Bereshit 7:13).

Noach is commanded to enter the *teva* (ark) smack in the middle of the day. The Torah uses the term בעצם היום הזה. Similar language is used in two other instances (highlighted by Rashi -Devarim 32: 48). The term בעצם היום הזה is used when Moshe is to ascend the mountain to die as well as when Bnei Yisrael leave Mitzrayim (Shemot 12). Rashi explains that the common denominator is that in all instances people may try to prevent the event from transpiring, but God will ensure that it occurs in the light of day and no one will be able to thwart the event from occurring!

Noach – the people of the generation may try to block Noach from entering the Ark, so God had Noach enter in the **light of day** to show the people they could do nothing to prevent it.

Yetziat Mitzrayim - the exodus occurred in the **light of day**, to underscore that it

was visible to all and Egyptians could not halt it.

Moshe's death – the people may have tried to do all in their power to stop Moshe from ascending the mountain upon which he was to die, so Moshe ascended in the **light of day** to show all that they could do nothing to interfere with Moshe's death.

The Shemen Hatov raises an interesting question with respect to Noach. In the two other instances, both with respect to Yetziat Mitzrayim and Moshe's death, the people had something to gain from seeking to prevent the occurrence. In the first instance, Moshe will remain alive and with the people and in the second, the Jewish people would remain in Egypt under Egyptian rule. However, it seems like the people who would prevent Noach from entering the ark, have nothing to gain! The flood would occur and wipe them out anyway. Why would they contemplate preventing Noach from entering the ark if they derive no benefit from that act?

The Shemen Hatov offers three suggestions, and we will focus on the third explanation. Unfortunately, when individuals have a strong opinion on a matter, at times they act in an irrational manner.

They seek to accomplish an objective, irrespective of the ramifications it may have on other individuals or society as a whole. The people of Noach's generation may seek to kill him, because he was offering rebuke to them over the hundred years it took to build the ark. They just wanted to stop him from preaching, whether or not there would be a positive result from their action. They did not focus on whether in the long run, their act would have any impact on the severity of the flood and the ability to save their lives.

We see this on several occasions in the Torah. As we have mentioned before regarding *makat tzefarde'a*. Rashi points out that this *pasuk* (Shemot 8: 1-2) switches from the plural *hatzefarde'im*, the frogs, to the singular *hatzefarde'a*, the frog, and he quotes *Hazal*, who explain this discrepancy: צפרדע אחת היתה והיו מכין אותה והיא מתותח נחילים נחילים.

There was one big frog, and every time the Egyptians hit it, it split and multiplied.

Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, also known as the Steipler, asks a seemingly obvious question: If the frog multiplied each time the Egyptians beat the frog, why did they continue to do so? It completely defies logic! They saw the consequences of their actions, so why didn't they just stop?

The Steipler explains that we see from here the power of anger. A person can become so angry that he begins to act irrationally. Then, despite the reality that stares him in the face, he can't control his reaction. The Egyptians saw that it wasn't helping to hit the frog, but their anger made them unable to think straight and control themselves. And so, they kept on hitting!



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No matter how upset we are in a given situation, we cannot lose our cool, or more importantly, we must think rationally. We ought to consider the ramifications of our actions. To look beyond the immediate situation and consider the lasting impact of what we do or say may have on others. All too often, short-sightedness can lead to a more severe result in the future than the perceived disaster we are grappling with in the present. ■

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